

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am signing Assembly Bills 2853, 2855 and 2856, which make reforms to the state mandates process and make several mandates optional.

When I signed the Executive Order in February of 2004 creating the California Performance Review, its mission was to make fundamental changes in state government, establish new procedures to create greater efficiencies, prioritize government functions, and create true accountability over the fiscal management of state resources. CPR reviews government functions at all levels when there is interaction with state government.

Among its recommendations, the California Performance Review urged the reform of the state mandates process to make reimbursement more cost efficient, predictable, and fair for both state and local government. These bills, particularly Assembly Bill 2856, represent a good start in undertaking that reform. Expanding the information required in a mandates claim will help the State predict its obligations to reimburse local government.

We need to continue the work begun by the California Performance Review and the Assembly Special Committee on State Mandates and further reform the state mandates process. We need to establish a mechanism for reducing or eliminating mandates when there is a change of law or when the costs decrease over time. We need to be vigilant in drafting and approving legislation that creates state-mandated local programs to evaluate it with an eye towards projecting accurately the future cost of the mandate.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger